nature net

The **Nature***Kenya* Newsletter **www.naturekenya.org** **October 2002**

NATURALIST'S CORNER

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Seeds with wings

By Dino J. Martins
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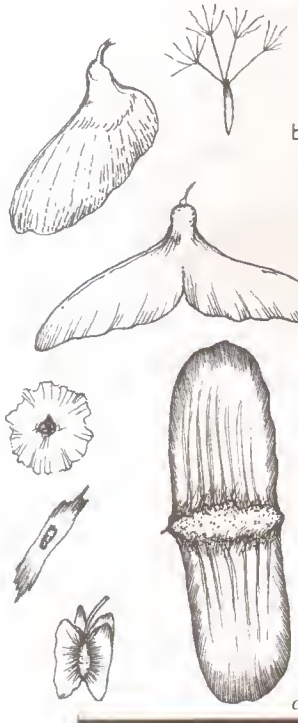
A crisp rustle permeates the August air as the wind rushes through the gorge. With a whisper and swish, the air fills with bright red, winged forms. They dance crazily about, rubbing shoulders, folling, startling small butterflies, before being whisked far out above the speckled bush, until out of sight. The wind's voice ceases as suddenly as it began and they drift down, slowly settling in the dust. They will never soor again.

These are the winged seeds of the spiny scrambler Pterolobium, (*Pterolobium stellatum*) common throughout drier forests and bush in Eost Africo. Eoch Pterolobium seed beors o curved wing that catches and coaxes the wind into carrying it away from its mother-plant. This seeded, winged being is botanically known os a Somara.



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GRASSROOTS

The Earth Summit in Johannesburg ended an an unexpected upbeat nate for the Green lobby. Russia and Conodo onnounced they will seek ta rotify the Kyoto Protocol on globol worming. Their decisian meons the treaty, including its system of troding rights ta emit corbon, should now be oble ta toke effect.

Other achievements of the summit included an agreement an water and sanitatian. Gavernments pledged to holve the number of people (about 1.1 billion) locking clean woter and bosic sonitatian by 2015.

Delegates olsa agreed thot international trade deals will no longer be oble to ignore enviranment treaties' development and ecalagy gaals.

And gavernments pramised ta take actian ta help the poor gain access to offordable energy, thaugh they didn't agree on targets ta baast the share af energy praduced fram renewoble sources.

from TIME magazine dated 16 September 2002

Where's the Action?

The Next Steps from Johannesburg
BirdLife International: a unique grauping af southern and narthern canservatian NGOs make a statement

The planet can only be sustoinable if its ecosystems work. Without o healthy environment, the quality of life of people around the world is seriously undermined.

...Since Rio, environmental degradation, especially climate change and biodiversity loss, has continued unobated. Some small steps in the right direction have been made in Johannesburg but it would be seriously misguided for world leoders or onyone else to suggest thot this is enough. The summit has not shown sufficient commitment to the people of the world to make real changes to the quality of their lives, especially in developing countries.

This is why BirdLife Internotional, a global alliance of conservation NGOs with 99 Partner organizations around the world, is calling for further oction resulting from the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development. We coll upon likeminded governments who want o more robust plan of action to commit to a tighter set of targets and timetables for real change. We suggest that these countries show leadership in the struggle to provide o better environment for current and future generations.

Specificolly, we coll for:
· a commitment to holting the loss of biodiversity by 2010. The intention to 'significantly reduce' biodiversity loss is simply not enough.

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Illustration from The Safari Star Guide by Alex and Joy MacKay

Where's the action, continued from page 1

· adoption of the ecosystems approach and the precautionary principle in social, economic and environmental policy making, including in the areas of natural resource management and trade.

· increased spending on biodiversity conservation programmes by the governments of the world, without delay.

· the development, through the United Nations, of on open and consultative plan of action, using the WEHAB papers on water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity as a basis.

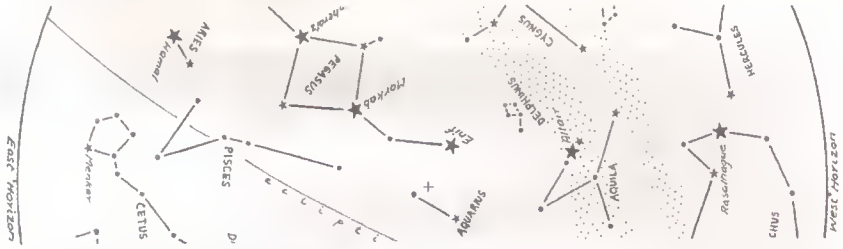
· adoption of a set of measurable indicators by governments to monitor national and international progress towards sustainable development.

While valuntary partnerships are welcomed, they are clearly not enough to halt environmental degradatian and the advance of poverty around the world. The alleviation of poverty depends on the sustainable use of natural resources. The nations of the world must make stronger commitments which governments, civil society and the private sector can take forward to make a real difference before it is too late.

Partners of BirdLife International present at the Summit:

BirdLife South Africa · Association Burundaise pour la Pratection des Oiseaux (ABO), Burundi · Cameroon Ornithalogical Club (COC), Cameroon · Canadian Nature Federation (CNF), Canada · Fondation des Amis de la Nature (NATURAMA), Burkina Faso · Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS), Greece · Hong Kong Birdwatching Society · Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO), France · **Nature Kenya** · Nature Seychelles · **Nature Uganda** · Naturschutzbund Deutschland (NABU), Germany · Nigeria Conservation Foundation (NCF) · Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand · Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), Jordan · Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), UK SalvaNatura, El Salvador
BirdLife Secretariat

BirdLife International is a global Partnership of national conservation NGOs, with 99 members.



EVENING SKY

By Alex and Ian MacKay and Fleur Ng'weno

This column points out the brightest stars, constellations and planets that can be seen in the early evening (about 7 to 9 pm) in October 2002. For best viewing, choose a place with few trees, and a night with few or no clouds.

October Stars

Look north. The constellation CYGNUS, the flying swan, is a little to the west of north. Three bright stars mark the tail and outspread wings of the swan; the long neck stretches upwards. Further west is the bright white star Vega.

The great square of PEGASUS, the flying horse, is a little to the east of north. A medium-bright star is at each corner of the 'great square'. Between Cygnus and Pegasus, and lower on the horizon, is a zigzag group of stars – the constellation CASSIOPEIA.

In the southwest, the winding constellation SCORPIUS the scorpion, and the teapot shape of SAGITTARIUS the Archer, are getting lower in the sky.

On a clear, dark night, you can see the Milky Way flowing across the sky from Cassiopeia, across Cygnus and Aquila, to Sagittarius and Scorpius. The Milky Way is made up of millions and millions of stars.

Planets, October 2002

Bright Venus gets lower and lower in the western sky and disappears into the sunset at the end of the month. It will pass between the Earth and the sun.

In the morning before dawn, the planets Jupiter and Saturn can be seen in the eastern sky. Jupiter is close to the waning moon on October 2.

Moon, October 2002

6 Oct *New moon* · 13 Oct. *First quarter* (overhead at sunset) · 21 Oct *Full moon* · 29 Oct *Last quarter* (rises at midnight)

Looking ahead

The most dramatic of sky events, an eclipse of the sun, will take place on December 4. It will be seen as a partial eclipse in East Africa. In parts of Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa and Mozambique, it will be a tatal eclipse.

RENEWALS

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In appreciotion of your support we gift you one of these beautiful, full colour, (unfromed) prints by British ortist Mortin Woodcock

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

BIRD RINGING

Meet at the Museum, Nairobi Botanic Garden, at 7:00 a.m. every Thursday.

SUNDAY BIRDWATCH

Members meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park at 9:00 a.m. the third Sunday of every month, **i.e. 20 October**. The members decide where to go. Bring lunch

TREE WALK

Guided Tree Walks in the Arboretum on the last Monday, i.e. **28 October from 9:30 a.m.** Meet at the FONA offices beside the Girl Guides HQ. *Those who are not members of FONA or Nature Kenya pay Ksh 100/- fee on arrival at the gate.*

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park every Wednesday at 8:45 a.m. Return about 12:30 p.m. *Those who are not members can get temporary membership at Ksh 100 per birdwalk, payable on arrival at the car park.*

ARABUKO-SOKOKE (COAST)

The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association is on the first Saturday of each month i.e. **5 October, at 6:30 a.m.** from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person.

FFJ Bird Walk (Coast)

Friends of Fort Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday of each month i.e. **19 October, at 4:00 p.m.** Please call Marlene Reid on (011) 491 648 to confirm

Ngong Road Forest Walks, Nairobi

The Ngong Road Forest Sanctuary Trust Nature walks are held on the first and third Saturdays of the month i.e. **5 & 19 October, at 9:00 a.m.** Meet at the stairs leading to the Restaurant at the Racecourse.

OCTOBER DIARY

Sat 5	ASF Birdwalks & NRF walk
Sat 12	Succulenta Excursion &
Youth Committee trip to Safari Walk	
Sat 19	FFJ Birdwalk & NRF walk
Sun 20	Sunday Birdwalk
Fri 25 & Sat 26	Rainwater
Harvesting Exposition	
Mon 28	Tree Walk
(Sat 2 Nov	Kinangop Outing)

Birdwalks every Wednesday Morning
Bird ringing every Thursday Morning

Editor, **Catherine Ngarachu**

Bird Hotline 3749957

Thekla Lark, Crested Lark, White-Crowned Starling, *Northern Kenya/ Aug* Itai Shanni

House Bunting, *Lake Turkana/ Aug* Bernard Chege

Maccoa Duck, African Snipe, Red-throated Wryneck, Little Rock Thrush, Grey-rumped Swallow, *Lalomarik Farm, Timau/ Aug* Anne Powys, Shailesh Patel

Kenya Birds Volume 9 1 & 2 2001 is now out and available with the October issue of Nature net!

CLASSIFIEDS

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DECLARATION

Nature Kenya does not accept any responsibility whatsoever in respect of negligence of any of its staff, volunteers or members organising the outings/trips or for any loss, injury, death or damage to property.

PLANT INDIGENOUS!

- **Attract Butterflies and Birds**
- **We can supply one tree or a forest**
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- **Delivery to Nairobi**

Contact: **Carole Hemmings**
0151 47332
hemmings@africaonline.co.ke

Malindi Camp and Cottage

Budget Lodgings in Idyllic Surroundings
Sabaki River Estuary, Kenya Coast

Five miles north of Malindi lies the Sabaki River, the second largest in Kenya. The site is renowned for its many beautiful birds--Madagascar Pratincole, Malindi Pipit, Carmine Bee-eater, Zanzibar Red Bishop, Fish Eagle, flamingoes and thousands of migratory waders, gulls and terns. This diverse landscape of tall dunes, delta wetlands, lily-covered hippo ponds and Giriama Tribe farms offer infinite hikes and photo opportunities. Malindi Camp and Cottage overlooks the Sabaki Estuary. The two large rooms have private shower and flush toilet and are US $15.00 for single, US $20.00 for double. The campsite is US $5.00 per night per person. Meals are available.

For Reservations Contact: Mr. Rodgers Karabu, PO Box 5289 Malindi, Kenya, East Africa
Email : rodgers@malindi.africaonline.com
Phone: International: 00254 722 797 213--In Kenya: 0722 797213
For more information see: www.malindicampandcottage.com

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Plants everywhere are faced with the problem of seed dispersal. As plants are as a rule immobile, they rely on 'dispersal agents' to carry their seeds out into the world.

The advantages of spreading seeds as far and wide as possible are manifold. Firstly, widely dispersed seeds reduce competition for light, food, water and space around the parent plant. If all seeds fell on the ground and germinated around their parent plants, few would survive due to limited resources

Other reasons for wide seed dispersal are related to genetic investment and reproductive success of plants. Seeds carry the plant's genes, therefore, the further away these are established, the healthier for the population in the long run. This will allow for better mixing of genetic material in subsequent generations.

The wind will sow some seeds 'on stony ground,' where they will die and some 'on paths,' where they will be eaten by birds. However, the wind also plants some of these seeds on 'fertile ground,' where nourished by soil, sunlight, rain and air, they thrive. Therefore, in terms of reproductive success, the more seeds spread over the most space in a given habitat simply increases the overall chances of survival.

Here in East Africa, hundreds of plant species, with seed structures as varied as the plants themselves, rely on wind dispersal. This includes many familiar trees, including Jacaranda, Nandi Flame, Combretum, Terminalia, Tipuana, and Markhamia. Their abundance points to the success of wind dispersal. The seeds themselves vary from the samara rotor-blades of Tipuana, to the multiple winged box-kites of Combretum, to the papery confetti flakes of the Jacaranda, Nandi Flame and Markhamia. Other species such as the tree Bombax, the milkweed Gomphocarpus, as well as the common dandelion, rely on a mesh of ultra-fine hairy fibres. These trap the slightest puff of breeze, sending the seed spiraling out into the great blue yonder, to face the perils and joys of the world.

FIELD TRIPS

YOUTH Committee Excursion

Saturday 12 October '02 9:00 a.m.

Meet at Kenyo Cinema, Moi Avenue at 9:00 a.m. (those who will be using public means) or meet ot the KWS main car pork at 9:30 a.m.

Bring a picnic lunch and some cash for your 50/- entry fees and bus fare.

Book at the Nature Kenya front office by Friday 11 October '02

SUCCULENTA Excursion

Saturday 12 October '02 10:00 a.m.

Join up with the Kenya Horticultural Society (KHS), to visit Waridi Ltd. Athi River, and John Wright's garden. Bring along your own picnic lunch, chairs, hats and drinks. October is warm and sunny!

The plan is to assemble at John Wright's house at 10:00 a.m. John, assisted by Len Newton and other succulent specialists will guide us round the extensive collection of succulents and other interesting plants. Next is Andy Cameron, who has a very different garden, as his specialities are indigenous trees, ornamental ponds and fish. By this time we should all be ready for our picnic lunch.

After lunch we will be shown round the rose greenhouses of Waridi Ltd, and for those with enough energy at the end of the day, John Wright, Barry and Andrew Cameron will show us their greenhouse collection of ornamental plants and indigenous tree nursery.
A selection of each will be available for sale.

Directions: Proceed down the Mombasa Road for approximately 26kms from Nyayo Stadium roundabout, turn left onto rough dirt road with KHS sign and also a sign for Danana School There will be KHS signs all along the road.
The Waridi farm is about 8 kms from the main Mombasa Road, please be careful on this rough road.

EVENTS

'Rainwater Harvesting for a Better Life'

3RD Rainwater Harvesting Exposition On *Friday 25 & Saturday 26 October '02*; At the National Museums, Nairobi, Louis Leakey Hall, car park; Entrance free ALL WELCOME

Know Kenya Course

Monday 4 – Thursday 14 November '02

For more information contact Kenya Museum Society on tel 3743808/ 3750136 info@KenyaMuseumSociety.org;

Offices open Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. or check out their website at www.KenyaMuseumSociety.org

Outing to Kinangop North

Saturday 2 November '02

Take a picnic and come enjoy a relaxing day birdwatching and walking on the grasslands of the Kinanop Plateau and the gardens of a guest house with spectacular views.

Book at the Kenya Museum Society office, with your Nature Kenya membership card and 300/- (children 200/-)
Meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park to depart at 7:30 p.m.